



VOLUSIA SHERIFF'S OFFICE

MICHAEL J. CHITWOOD, SHERIFF

Office of Chief Deputy Brian M. Henderson - Internal Affairs

REPORT OF INVESTIGATION

REPORT NUMBER: IA 26-001

PERIOD COVERED: October 02, 2025 – October 03, 2025

DATE REPORTED: November 21, 2025

SUBJECT NAME: Deputy Royce James #8599
Sergeant Dennis Gonzalez #7742

INVESTIGATING OFFICER: Sergeant Michael Vanzo, #8469
Volusia Sheriff's Office Internal Affairs

BASIS FOR INVESTIGATION:

On November 21, 2025, the Volusia Sheriff's Office received a written complaint from [REDACTED] alleging misconduct by Deputy Royce James. In her complaint, [REDACTED] stated on October 3, 2025, she was arrested by Deputy James on two counts of Domestic Violence Stalking under Florida Statute § 784.048(2).

The arrest stemmed from an incident in which numerous tampons were thrown onto the lawn of a residence belonging to the complainant's ex-boyfriend, [REDACTED] and his new girlfriend, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] alleged Deputy James omitted material facts in his arrest report, acted with reckless disregard for the truth when preparing the affidavit, and suspected improper influence in connection with the arrest. [REDACTED] advised her arrest was made without probable cause, relevant statements were intentionally excluded from the affidavit, and there were concerns regarding the authenticity of the notary listed on the arrest documentation.

[REDACTED] was ultimately released from custody after first appearance, during which the judge found insufficient probable cause for the arrest, and the charges against her were subsequently dropped.

DEPUTY ROYCE JAMES - OFFENSES:

GO-026-02.V.D.9.p – Use of Equipment: BWC – Employees shall not intentionally through acts of negligence or inattention, cause interruption or defeat of the BWC for its intended purpose of recording law enforcement encounters.

GO-026-02.V.B.3 – Disciplinary Rules – Any other conduct or action, on-duty or off-duty, of such seriousness that disciplinary action is considered warranted.

GO-026-02.V.C.5.m – Negligence, Not Endangering – Employees shall not ignore or violate official general orders, orders, or supervisory instructions or knowingly fail to properly execute the duties and responsibilities of their assigned positions.

GO-026-02.V.G.1.a – General Proficiency – VSO personnel are required to maintain the job knowledge, skills and abilities required for the performance of the duties and responsibilities attendant to their positions.

SERGEANT DENNIS GONZALEZ - OFFENSES:

GO-026.02.V.G.3.a – Supervisor Responsibility – Each supervisor shall provide guidance and training to subordinate staff for effective and efficient achievement of established goals and objectives. A supervisor has the responsibility and authority for assigning, reviewing, and monitoring activities of subordinate staff under their command. In addition, a supervisor shall provide clear directions to subordinates and address specific problems for completion of work assignments. The supervisor shall also ensure that assigned employees comply with applicable federal and state laws, Volusia County ordinances, and all VSO written direction as provided through general orders, Training Bulletins, policies and procedures.

GO-026-02.V.B.3 – Disciplinary Rules – Any other conduct or action, on-duty or off-duty, of such seriousness that disciplinary action is considered warranted.

GO-026-02.V.C.5.m – Negligence, Not Endangering – Employees shall not ignore or violate official general orders, orders, or supervisory instructions or knowingly fail to properly execute the duties and responsibilities of their assigned positions.

GO-026-02.V.G.1.a – General Proficiency – VSO personnel are required to maintain the job knowledge, skills and abilities required for the performance of the duties and responsibilities attendant to their positions.

INVESTIGATION:

On January 2, 2026, Chief Deputy Henderson assigned the incident to the Volusia Sheriff's Office Internal Affairs Unit. This report details the Internal Affairs investigation conducted by Sergeant Michael Vanzo.

On January 2, 2026 Sergeant Vanzo and Lieutenant Gordon met with Deputy Royce James and served him with a Notice of Internal Investigation and a copy of the Florida Law Enforcement Officer's Bill of Rights. Both documents were signed by Deputy James, who acknowledged receipt.

On January 7, 2026 Lieutenant Gordon met with Sergeant Dennis Gonzalez and served him with a Notice of Internal Investigation and a copy of the Florida Law Enforcement Officer's Bill of Rights. Both documents were signed by Sergeant Gonzalez, who acknowledged receipt.

Sergeant Vanzo obtained all the relevant documents and digital evidence pertaining to the case which included the charging affidavit, incident report, initial and supplemental citizen's complaints and body worn camera footage.

On January 13, 2026 at approximately 1106 hours, Sergeant Vanzo contacted Assistant State Attorney Jennifer White via email to inquire whether any follow-up communication occurred with Deputy James between first appearance and her decision to nolle prosequi the case.

Assistant State Attorney Jennifer White stated the following:

"No, I did not consult with anyone, other than the victims, about this case prior to making that decision.

The charges came through as 2 counts of Domestic Violence Stalking. The first issue is with [REDACTED] [REDACTED] Having never lived with the Def this could not be domestic in nature. The next issue is stalking in general. This was 1 isolated incident. The next issue is "follows, harasses, or cyberstalks"- she did not follow or cyber harass (not that was brought to my attention) leaving harass as the only option.

784.048(2) A person who willfully, maliciously, and repeatedly follows, harasses, or cyberstalks another person commits the offense of stalking, a misdemeanor of the first degree, punishable as provided in s. 775.082 or s. 775.083.

"Harass" means to engage in a course of conduct directed at a specific person which causes substantial emotional distress to that person and serves no legitimate purpose.

Having decided stalking would not work I looked at criminal mischief. There was no damage so that does not fit. The only other option is littering which is non-criminal.

The defendant has no prior record so I dropped it as arrest sufficient.

I did let the victim(s) know if there is anything aside from this one isolated incident, they should let me know. “

Body-Worn Camera (BWC) Footage Review

Sergeant Vanzo reviewed Deputy James' body-worn camera footage from the incident, which captured the events surrounding [REDACTED] arrest and her transport to the VSO District 4 Office. During this review, Sergeant Vanzo determined Deputy James' interactions with [REDACTED] were not captured on his body-worn camera. Furthermore, no additional body-worn camera footage related to this case was linked by Deputy James.

Sergeant Vanzo reviewed Deputy Aiden Hughes' body-worn camera footage, which revealed the holding cell area prior to transport, as well as the subsequent transport of [REDACTED] from the District 4 Office to jail. During this review, Sergeant Vanzo observed Deputy Hughes had positioned his body-worn camera toward the holding cell area to monitor an unrelated intoxicated individual who was under constant observation for D.U.I. This positioning also incidentally recorded [REDACTED] Deputies were frequently seen communicating with the intoxicated female in an effort to calm her.

At 28 minutes and 44 seconds, Sergeant Vanzo observed Deputy James approach [REDACTED] while she was secured in the holding cell and briefly spoke to her. Due to the distance and the high volume of the intoxicated subject, Sergeant Vanzo was unable to determine what was said. In [REDACTED] complaint she alleged while in the holding cell Deputy James commented, *“If I wanted water and a cookie which was strange considering the behavior he had just given me. And then comes back and says well now that we’re not on body cam footage I was trying to get you to shut up and then said something else but respectfully I had disassociated.”*

It should be noted Deputy James placed [REDACTED] in the holding cell at approximately 0106 hours, while the intoxicated female was placed in the adjacent holding cell at approximately 0236 hours. This resulted in a period during which no body-worn camera was recording [REDACTED] inside the building. Sergeant Vanzo reviewed the initial supervisor's inquiry into this incident, which confirmed the surveillance footage from inside District 4 could not be reviewed because it had been automatically purged from the system due to the time elapsed since the incident.

Sergeant Vanzo also reviewed body-worn camera footage from Detective Bartzler [prior road deputy], which documented the initial law enforcement response on September 30, 2025, and captured verbal statements from both [REDACTED] [reporting parties].

VSO Information Technology Audit (I.T)

Sergeant Vanzo reviewed the arrest report and observed the recorded date and time for Deputy James' and Deputy McNabb's notary signature were identical. This appeared impossible, as only one person can sign at a time. VSO I.T. was consulted and conducted an independent audit, which revealed the ERMS system does not record the actual time of the deputies' signatures. Instead, the timestamp reflects when the report was initially generated by the reporting deputy.

To verify this finding, Sergeant Vanzo reviewed Deputy James' body-worn camera footage and confirmed the report was generated at the time shown in the signature timestamp, corroborating I.T.'s audit of the reporting system.

Interview with [REDACTED]

On January 6, 2026, at approximately 1055 hours, Lieutenant Gordon and Sergeant Vanzo conducted a sworn, recorded interview with [REDACTED]. The interview took place at the Sheriff's Office Administrative Building at 123 W. Indiana Avenue, Deland. Below is a synopsis of the audio-recorded interview.

The interview began with [REDACTED] providing an overview of the circumstances surrounding her arrest, which occurred during the late hours of October 2, 2025 into October 3, 2025. During the interview, [REDACTED] provided background information, as well as an account of the events leading to her arrest for Domestic Violence Stalking.

[REDACTED] reported she was in a five-year relationship with her [REDACTED] [REDACTED] which she described as emotionally and sexually abusive, with repeated infidelity. [REDACTED] stated [REDACTED] cheated on her at least five times she is aware of. [REDACTED] ended the relationship in March 2024 and later learned [REDACTED] had been involved with [REDACTED] since November 2023. [REDACTED] explained after breaking up with [REDACTED] she had no contact with him or his new girlfriend, [REDACTED]. She stated, *"I avoid them like the plague."*

The incident in question began in late September 2025. [REDACTED] Dionne Skaggs, traveled from Ohio to Florida to stay with [REDACTED] while dealing with her own marital issues. Although [REDACTED] did not have much of a relationship with Dionne, she viewed the visit as an opportunity to extend an *"olive branch"* and possibly connect. [REDACTED] said she felt they shared common ground due to both having recently experienced difficult relationships.

[REDACTED] invited Dawn and Dionne to her home for dinner as part of her attempt to connect. When they arrived, Dawn brought food, and they also had bags from CVS containing supplies to paint tampons. [REDACTED] was confused by the items and asked what they were for.

[REDACTED] said Dionne spray-painted the tampons and described the activity as *"stupid."* However, both Dionne and Dawn told her not to worry about it and refused to explain their intentions. *"They did not tell me what the plan was at all. They were just like don't worry about it, don't worry about it we'll tell you later we'll tell you later. And my mom was kind of in the same like don't worry about it it's just funny like we'll tell you later. Ok. So they were like just drive. [REDACTED] gives me the address."*

According to [REDACTED] she drove Dawn and Dionne to a residence she later understood belonged to [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] stated, *"I did not know where he lives. And even now I couldn't tell you how to get there."*

With Dawn and Dionne riding in the open bed of the pickup truck, [REDACTED] drove to the address. [REDACTED] recalled once at the address Dawn and Dionne *"hopped out,"* tampons were thrown onto

the lawn, and they returned to the truck. The three of them then left the area. According to [REDACTED] she never exited the vehicle, never touched the tampons and never entered the property.

Several days later, [REDACTED] advised Deputy Royce James arrived at her residence to investigate the incident. [REDACTED] answered the door voluntarily and attempted to explain her role in the situation, emphasizing she only drove the vehicle and did not plan or carry out the act itself. [REDACTED] alleged Deputy James spoke over her, accused her of lying, and refused to listen to her explanation.

[REDACTED] reported Deputy James was aggressive during their interaction, stating he dismissed what she tried to explain and immediately told her if it was up to him she would be going to jail. Additionally, [REDACTED] was upset, Deputy James brought up the fact her career may be in jeopardy. According to [REDACTED] Deputy James refused to comprehend her statements she only drove the vehicle and did not purchase, paint, or throw the tampons. [REDACTED] explained her complaint is based on what she perceived as unprofessional conduct, a lack of probable cause for the arrest, and Deputy James allegedly shaping the incident into multiple events to support his narrative. [REDACTED] also stated during the incident, Dawn admitted over the phone that she [Dawn] and Dionne were involved, which [REDACTED] believed Deputy James failed to document in his report.

According to [REDACTED] Deputy James has a pattern of aggressive behavior toward firefighters, stating several of her firefighter friends described similar encounters with him.

As the interview continued, [REDACTED] suggested the prior position of [REDACTED] as a Volusia County Corrections Officer may have influenced how the incident was handled, implying possible preferential treatment. When asked whether [REDACTED] had any information indicating Deputy James personally knew [REDACTED] or [REDACTED] [REDACTED] said she did not. [REDACTED] explained her concern stemmed from the possibility of a connection, noting Deputy James appeared personally offended during the incident, though she did not know the reason for that reaction.

[REDACTED] stated after she was arrested and placed in a holding cell at the District 4 Office, Deputy James approached her and told her, *"Well now that we're not on body cam footage I was trying to get you to shut up."* When asked what [REDACTED] believed he meant by that comment, [REDACTED] said she was unsure. [REDACTED] explained Deputy James appeared determined to pursue a stalking charge, asserting he even convinced a supervisor after 15–20 minutes despite the supervisor initially describing the incident as a prank and questioning whether it supported an arrest. According to [REDACTED] Deputy James resisted the supervisor's view and remained adamant the incident constituted domestic violence stalking.

[REDACTED] was asked to provide clarification regarding her allegation of *"reckless disregard for the truth."* [REDACTED] explained this was based in part on Deputy James failing to document Dawn's admission of involvement in his arrest report. [REDACTED] stated it also stemmed from Deputy James' behavior during their interaction, describing him as repeatedly interrupting her and refusing to listen. According to [REDACTED] Deputy James had already settled on a narrative and disregarded any information that did not support it. [REDACTED] referenced a statement she believed Deputy James made, *"regardless of the truth it's retarded,"* as evidence she believed Deputy James did not care

about the truth. [REDACTED] added she did not commit the actions related to the stalking allegation, stating Dawn and Dionne admitted responsibility and their admissions were omitted from the report, contributing to her belief Deputy James disregarded the truth.

The charge against [REDACTED] was ultimately dismissed approximately 12 hours after [REDACTED] arrest, and she reiterated there was no probable cause. [REDACTED] later reviewed the arrest report and questioned the authenticity of the notary's signature. [REDACTED] noted the signatures for Deputy James and Deputy McNabb appeared unusually similar, and both were later redacted. [REDACTED] found the redactions suspicious and believed it was possible Deputy James had written both signatures. [REDACTED] explained she and Dawn observed the similarities, compared them to other documents signed by Deputy McNabb, and found the signatures to be inconsistent. [REDACTED] stated the subsequent redaction raised additional concerns because she was unsure whether such a process was standard.

[REDACTED] questioned why certain portions of the documentation were redacted, stating she was concerned because, as a first responder, information that should have protected her was not redacted. After reviewing the materials provided by [REDACTED] it was determined the redactions were made by the Volusia - Clerk of the Circuit Court, not the Volusia Sheriff's Office. As the interview concluded, [REDACTED] was asked if she had anything further to add. [REDACTED] believed the incident reflected unprofessional conduct by Deputy James and what appeared to her as a personal vendetta, along with improper influence and a lack of probable cause for her arrest.

Interview with Dawn [REDACTED]

On January 6, 2026, at approximately 1204 hours, Lieutenant Gordon and Sergeant Vanzo conducted a sworn, recorded interview with Dawn [REDACTED]. The interview took place at the Sheriff's Office Administrative Building at 123 W. Indiana Avenue, Deland. Below is a synopsis of the audio-recorded interview.

Dawn began the interview by providing background on [REDACTED] prior relationship with [REDACTED] and the circumstances leading to [REDACTED] arrest for Domestic Violence Stalking.

Dawn explained she recently learned about certain interactions that occurred during the five-year relationship and wanted [REDACTED] to know she was aware of them. Dawn said she and her sister, Dionne [REDACTED] were on their way to [REDACTED] house for dinner when the idea for what they viewed as a harmless prank came up.

After discussing the situation throughout the week, Dawn made a comment expressing frustration about [REDACTED] behavior, and her sister jokingly suggested throwing tampons in [REDACTED] yard. Dawn said the idea felt spontaneous and "*benign*." They stopped at a CVS on Providence and purchased the supplies necessary to complete the prank. According to Dawn, she and her sister were laughing about the prank, which made [REDACTED] suspicious, but they chose not to tell [REDACTED] because, to Dawn, the moment felt empowering and light-hearted.

Dawn reiterated the prank was entirely her and her sister Dionne's idea and [REDACTED] had no prior knowledge of it. Dawn believed the prank was harmless and stated she never intended to place [REDACTED] in a situation that could be used against her.

Dawn also clarified she located [REDACTED] address using a Google search and [REDACTED] was not involved. Dawn felt this was important because body camera footage captured [REDACTED] stating she did not know where he lived.

Dawn explained she did not tell [REDACTED] about the prank beforehand because [REDACTED] had been struggling emotionally, and she and her sister wanted to lift her spirits. Dawn described the decision as spontaneous and out of character for her, saying they intended it as a light-hearted way to get [REDACTED] engaged and break her out of a difficult period. Dawn said she even anticipated they might receive a littering ticket, and was willing to accept that consequence. Dawn emphasized the intention was simply to support [REDACTED] not to place her in a harmful situation.

Dawn went on to describe the events that occurred when Deputy James arrived at [REDACTED] residence, explaining [REDACTED] called her around midnight and kept her on the phone during much of the encounter. Dawn was able to hear portions of the interaction and believed Deputy James thought [REDACTED] was lying. Dawn recalled [REDACTED] telling him, "*Someone's having a bad day,*" and stated his repeated responses, insisting he was "*Having a great day,*" came across as condescending. Dawn said this exchange made her feel Deputy James had already decided to arrest [REDACTED] before arriving and nothing either of them said would change the outcome.

Dawn further recounted hearing Deputy James tell [REDACTED] her denial was "*ridiculous*", and she needed to "*grow up,*" which Dawn believed caused [REDACTED] to emotionally shut down. According to Dawn, Deputy James continued speaking over [REDACTED] and dismissing her attempts to explain herself. Dawn also believed Deputy James had communicated his intent to arrest [REDACTED] to his supervisor beforehand and felt Deputy James was unwilling to consider any new information contradicting that decision. Dawn said this made the situation feel like a "*favor*" for the daughter of a former Volusia County Corrections Officer.

Dawn admitted she had limited information about [REDACTED] father, whom she believed was a retired corrections officer named [REDACTED] and described him as a respected veteran. Dawn said after searching for any connection between him and Deputy James, she found no evidence. Dawn stated, "*I really think this had just more to do with Deputy James himself.*"

Dawn continued the interview and explained at approximately 29 minutes and 45 seconds into the body-worn camera footage, Deputy James was heard telling his supervisor [REDACTED] had "*fully admitted everything,*" which Dawn stated was untrue. According to Dawn, [REDACTED] had consistently denied purchasing or throwing the tampons. Dawn emphasized [REDACTED] did not know where they were going because the prank had been planned only by Dawn and Dionne.

Dawn stated after Deputy James returned from his phone conversation with his sergeant, Deputy James said if it were up to him, [REDACTED] would "*already be in the back*" of the patrol car. Dawn recalled becoming alarmed at that point. Dawn explained when she called [REDACTED] back, [REDACTED] placed her on speakerphone, but unlike earlier in the encounter, Deputy James was no

longer willing to speak with her. Dawn believed this showed he was not going to reconsider his decision and he dismissed [REDACTED] request for him to talk to her [Dawn].

Dawn recalled Deputy James speaking to his supervisor multiple times during the encounter and mentioned third party allegations of contact. Dawn said she knew this was untrue because she monitored [REDACTED] social media and both [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] had each other blocked. Dawn emphasized no third-party evidence was ever provided or verified and believed these uncorroborated claims played a significant role in the decision to arrest [REDACTED]

Dawn said after the second phone call with Deputy James' sergeant, Deputy James returned and told [REDACTED] *"Unfortunately for you he agrees with me in taking you to jail"* which left her in shock and convinced her the decision to arrest had already been made. Dawn described Deputy James' tone and behavior as hostile, stating Deputy James talked over [REDACTED] and dismissed her attempts to explain. Dawn believed the investigation was not neutral and [REDACTED] was treated unfairly.

Dawn reiterated her belief [REDACTED] had not stalked [REDACTED] and did not deserve the stalking charge, stating the arrest caused lasting harm to [REDACTED] reputation and career. Dawn explained by the time she arrived at the residence, [REDACTED] had already been taken into custody.

Dawn stated, *"The next day I go onto the docket, I pull off the arrest affidavit."* Dawn explained she was shocked to see [REDACTED] had been charged with stalking, stating it made no sense because [REDACTED] had no contact with [REDACTED]

While reviewing the arrest report, Dawn noticed similarities between the signatures of Deputy James and Deputy McNabb, which were later redacted. Dawn recalled the unredacted version on October 3rd, where only [REDACTED] information was redacted. When she retrieved another copy on November 7th, the deputies signatures were redacted as well, which she found unusual.

Dawn raised concerns similar to [REDACTED] regarding the redactions and signatures; however, it was clarified the documents she referenced were obtained from the Volusia - Clerk of the Circuit Court and those redactions were made by that office and not by the Volusia Sheriff's Office.

As the interview was concluding, Dawn accepted responsibility for the incident, repeatedly stating she was the one who initiated it and felt she should be held accountable for any consequences. Dawn explained the situation quickly escalated on social media, noting by the following morning [REDACTED] had tagged [REDACTED] employer and shared the content widely. Dawn said the incident spread from local platforms to national and eventually international attention, becoming permanently indexed online.

Dawn explained as a result, she and her husband must remain closely involved in supporting [REDACTED] Dawn emphasized [REDACTED] public dissemination of the incident combined with the narrative portraying [REDACTED] as a *"liar," "crazy," "untrustworthy,"* and a *"stalker,"* was retraumatizing for [REDACTED] and reinforced the same patterns of abuse she had already been working to overcome.

In closing Dawn said, *"I think the thing I'm walking you know and in every great tragedy are great lessons and you've always got to look for the lights. And do something with them and, and I will. Meaning like how do I use this experience to help others. First of all break your silence. So as tragic as this is her silence is broken and that's good right? So there's a win with that. We have to have the conversation now. So but at the, the thing that keeps me up at night is this. She didn't have the courage to say to Deputy James and Deputy James was so unwilling to hear an alternative like she was just the monster period but she's not. She's his victim. This situation is my fault and I take full responsibility for what I did. I tried, I'm trying now. Never will I run from my responsibility. But this, this can get women killed and that is what terrifies me and probably makes me the most upset...And I'm disappointed because I... I needed him [Deputy James] to be better than that."*

██████████ and ██████████

██████████ were contacted on January 27, 2026; however, both declined the opportunity to be interviewed by the Volusia Sheriff's Office Internal Affairs Unit.

Below is a sworn written statement ██████████ provided to Deputy James on October 2, 2025.

I, ██████████, do hereby and voluntarily, make the following statement:

"At 2208 a black chevy truck passed by my house slowly and staged for about a minute about 3 houses down. The chevy truck did a u-turn and approached my house slowly. Approximately 2-3 people were in the back of this truck, they proceed to throw over 100 + bloody tampons into my yard. I suspect its my ██████████ who threw these tampons. ██████████ has continuously talked harshly about me & my boyfriend. ██████████ also drives the same truck that was in the video.

I would like to press charges."

Interview with Detective Ethan Bartzler [Prior Road Deputy]

On January 12, 2026, at approximately 0921 hours, Lieutenant Gordon and Sergeant Vanzo conducted a sworn, recorded interview with Detective Ethan Bartzler. The interview took place at the Sheriff's Office Administrative Building at 123 W. Indiana Avenue, Deland. Below is a synopsis of the audio-recorded interview.

Detective Bartzler, a prior road deputy, explained he was the first to respond to the incident on September 30, 2025, before Deputy James became involved. Upon arrival, he made contact with the reporting parties, ██████████ and ██████████. After reviewing surveillance footage showing a truck passing the residence, the reporting parties told him they believed ██████████ was responsible for throwing tampons onto the lawn. Detective Bartzler confirmed the prior relationship met the domestic violence criteria, then evaluated whether any criminal offense had occurred. Detective Bartzler determined the incident was a onetime event with no prior similar behavior, no ongoing contact, and no pattern indicating stalking. After re-checking the statute to ensure he was not overlooking anything, he concluded the elements of stalking were not met. Detective Bartzler

informed [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] the incident was not criminal in nature, provided an event number, and advised them to contact law enforcement if any further incidents occurred.

Detective Bartzler recalled [REDACTED] mentioned hearing comments [REDACTED] was supposedly saying through second or third party sources, but none of the statements were made directly to [REDACTED] or [REDACTED]. Detective Bartzler stated these allegations still did not rise to the level of stalking. Detective Bartzler said he explained this to [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] and both appeared to be understanding.

Detective Bartzler stated he later learned Deputy James had become involved in the case and arrested [REDACTED] for stalking. Detective Bartzler explained he became aware of the arrest after speaking Deputy James a few days later, when Deputy James advised the incident was, in fact, stalking. Detective Bartzler recalled asking Deputy James, *"What did I miss?"* and that he didn't understand.

Detective Bartzler said he did not become re-involved in the case but later exchanged text messages with Deputy James to better understand the basis for the arrest. According to Detective Bartzler, Deputy James told him the suspects formulated a plan, bought a bunch of tampons, painted them red, loaded up the truck, drove all the way over to the house, threw the tampons in the yard, drove away, jumped out of the truck, ran back to the yard, and threw more tampons in the yard.

Detective Bartzler said he still did not believe the incident met the statutory requirements for stalking, explaining his understanding the offense requires a repeated pattern of behavior directed at the victim. Detective Bartzler also noted during his initial response, he briefly reviewed license plate reader data and did not recall seeing anything that indicated a pattern.

Detective Bartzler advised he was unaware of any personal relationship or nexus between Deputy James and the reporting party nor any impartial influence. He further advised, he did not notify a supervisor during his response because he determined the incident was non-criminal, explaining, *"I determined it was nothing."*

Interview with Deputy Renee McNabb

On January 12, 2026, at approximately 1027 hours, Lieutenant Gordon and Sergeant Vanzo conducted a sworn, recorded interview with Deputy Renee McNabb. The interview took place at the Sheriff's Office Administrative Building at 123 W. Indiana Avenue, Deland. Below is a synopsis of the audio-recorded interview.

Deputy McNabb began the interview by explaining her involvement in the incident as serving as the backup unit and conducting the pat down of [REDACTED] once she was arrested and before she was transported. Deputy McNabb advised she did not interview any witnesses, nor did she have any direct interaction with the reporting parties. Deputy McNabb explained her role was limited to a backup unit and she did not provide any input towards the outcome of the case.

Deputy McNabb was asked if she remembered notarizing Deputy James' arrest affidavit to which she stated, *"I believe I did but I cannot recall."* Deputy McNabb further explained the signatures captured on the arrest affidavit are digital and she used her finger to sign them instead of a stylus.

pen. Deputy McNabb continued, *"That's why it's very like I said it's very inconsistent of me like doing like a loopy loop or some like miss a R or M or whatever and if I'm in a rush then it's just like whatever I do at the time."*

Deputy McNabb was asked if the signature on the arrest report looked like it was forged to which she stated, *"It looks like something I would do"* and *"no it doesn't look out of place, no."*

Deputy McNabb described Deputy James' demeanor on scene, stating, *"I mean I thought it was professional,"* and stated, *"Nothing out of the ordinary stood out that was unethical or anything."*

Interview with Sergeant William Leven

On January 13, 2026, at approximately 1340 hours, Lieutenant Gordon and Sergeant Vanzo conducted a sworn, recorded interview with Sergeant William Leven. The interview took place at the Sheriff's Office Administrative Building at 123 W. Indiana Avenue, Deland. Below is a synopsis of the audio-recorded interview.

Sergeant Leven stated on October 2, 2025, he was working as a supervisor in Deltona, District 4, when he learned Deputy James had been flagged down in District 6 by a firefighter reporting an incident which occurred in Deltona. According to Sergeant Leven, Deputy James gathered the initial information, completed most of the investigative work, and then contacted him to report the suspect was currently in Deltona. Because Deputy James was already in contact with the parties involved, Deputy James continued handling the investigation rather than transferring it to a Deltona deputy.

Sergeant Leven explained during their call, Deputy James briefed him on the incident and discussed his investigative plan. Although he could not recall whether a written report had been completed at the time, he remembered expressing he did not feel comfortable with making an arrest based solely on one singular incident.

Sergeant Leven said Deputy James explained there had been one or two prior drive-bys he intended to use as the pattern of behavior necessary for a stalking charge. Sergeant Leven told him he still did not feel comfortable with a physical arrest and suggested he speak to his own supervisor for his guidance.

Sergeant Leven recalled later speaking with Sergeant Gonzalez and explaining his concerns, noting because the incident occurred in Deltona, the expectation was a Deltona supervisor would ultimately approve the report and any arrest decision. Sergeant Leven told Sergeant Gonzalez he was not comfortable with the arrest but said if Sergeant Gonzalez felt the elements were met, he could authorize it.

When asked whether either Deputy James or Sergeant Gonzalez followed up regarding the arrest decision, Sergeant Leven said he did not recall any further specific discussions beyond reviewing the stalking statute together. Sergeant Leven remembered suggesting running the situation by the Watch Commander for his perspective. Sergeant Leven was asked who the Watch Commander was that night who he believed was Lieutenant Bryan Barnard.

Sergeant Leven stated he had no involvement in the original report of the incident and his patrol shift did not handle the initial response. Sergeant Leven further clarified, he did not recall any separate prior incidents beyond the same singular event being reported.

Sergeant Leven confirmed an arrest was ultimately made and the suspect was transported to District 4, Deltona. Sergeant Leven stated he did not have direct contact with the arrested individual regarding the case or any additional information pertaining to this investigation.

Interview with Lieutenant Bryan Barnard

On January 16, 2026, at approximately 1345 hours, Lieutenant Gordon and Sergeant Vanzo conducted a sworn, recorded interview with Lieutenant Bryan Barnard. The interview took place at the Sheriff's Office Administrative Building at 123 W. Indiana Avenue, Deland. Below is a synopsis of the audio-recorded interview.

Lieutenant Barnard confirmed during the evening of October 2, 2025 into the early morning of October 3, 2025, he was serving as the Watch Commander. Lieutenant Barnard remembered the incident involving tampons being thrown onto the property of a residence in Deltona but described his recollection as vague.

Lieutenant Barnard explained his involvement was limited to receiving a notification from Sergeant Dennis Gonzalez regarding the incident. Lieutenant Barnard stated the notification was made because the incident involved firefighters from multiple agencies, which Sergeant Gonzalez believed warranted informing the Watch Commander. Lieutenant Barnard stated he did not respond to the scene, did not speak with any involved parties, and did not review any reports associated with the incident.

Sergeant Vanzo asked Lieutenant Barnard how he normally receives notifications to which he responded, *"He [Sergeant Gonzalez] would have sent me a notification via text typically. And then a lot of times we do speak about it on the phone as well. But, and I believe we did because this was a little convoluted."*

When asked about his recollection of the conversation Lieutenant Barnard stated, *"I don't recall it being a question of do you think this is enough. I don't remember it being that type of conversation. This is what happened. Or this is what we're gonna do, something along those lines."*

Lieutenant Barnard was asked if there was anything concerning or inconsistent with the Stalking charge or any red flags. Lieutenant Barnard answered, *"I don't remember anything that seemed like it wouldn't have... Right. It I mean if it was if I heard anything that concerned me I would have you know... tried to vet that out."*

During the interview, Lieutenant Barnard located the text message notification sent by Sergeant Gonzalez on October 3, 2025, at approximately 2:29 a.m. (This notification was received after [REDACTED] was physically taken into custody and transported to the Sheriff's Office.)

The complete message read as follows:

"DV Stalking / CBA by Patrol 250020260 Incident occurred on 09/30/2025 at [REDACTED] A Debary firefighter, referred to as V1, reported to Deputy James an incident that occurred at her home with her [REDACTED] V2, at [REDACTED] They found about 75 opened red-stained tampons scattered in their front yard. Ring camera footage showed a dark-colored pickup truck driving past their house and returning, with someone inside throwing the tampons. V1 and V2 suspect D1, V2's [REDACTED] who has a history of harassment. Deputy James later contacted D1 at [REDACTED] She admitted that she had gone to V1 and V2's home with [REDACTED] painted tampons red, and dumped them in the yard. D1 confirmed she knew it was V1 and V2's residence. D1 was arrested and transported to VCBJ. [REDACTED]"

Lieutenant Barnard explained he was not aware of any discussion involving third-party contact and explained his understanding at the time was the arrested individual *"admitted"* to committing the act and *"there's some history ongoing pattern of behavior."*

Lieutenant Barnard concluded he had no direct involvement in the investigation aside from the notification provided by Sergeant Gonzalez.

Subject Interview with Sergeant Dennis Gonzalez

On February 3, 2026, at approximately 1013 hours, Lieutenant Gordon and Sergeant Vanzo conducted a sworn, recorded interview with Sergeant Dennis Gonzalez. The interview took place at the Sheriff's Office Administration Building at 123 W. Indiana Avenue, Deland. Also present with Sergeant Gonzalez was his Union Representative Sergeant Sean Gowan. Below is a synopsis of the audio recorded interview.

Sergeant Gonzalez confirmed he had been provided with his law enforcement bill of rights, Garrity Warning, and case file which he had time to review prior to his interview.

Sergeant Gonzalez began the interview by stating he has been employed in law enforcement since 2010 and is currently assigned as a patrol sergeant in District 6 (DeBary). He has served in the rank of sergeant for approximately two years. Sergeant Gonzalez was asked to explain his recollection of the events leading to the arrest of [REDACTED] and the subsequent citizen's complaint.

Sergeant Gonzalez stated his involvement began when Deputy James contacted him regarding an incident in Deltona which had been reported by [REDACTED] a firefighter who works next to the [REDACTED]

It was Sergeant Gonzalez's understanding District 4 [Deltona deputies] had previously attempted to investigate [REDACTED] complaint, and it had been *"Blown off by District 4."* Sergeant Gonzalez

recalled responding to Deputy James, *"Lets investigate and make sure that we don't mess this up"* and stated Deputy James proceeded with conducting an investigation.

While discussing the situation with Deputy James, Sergeant Gonzalez believed the incident would only result in an information report. Sergeant Gonzalez explained he initially thought the situation was *"silly,"* stating *"because they were, they were throwing tampons at the house and it's... it's like... yes. Like a childish I think."*

After this discussion, Deputy James responded to [REDACTED] address in Deltona and conducted an interview with her. Sergeant Gonzalez advised because [REDACTED] was also a firefighter, he notified the Watch Commander and provided him with the *"gist"* of the situation.

Once on scene, Deputy James interviewed [REDACTED] and then spoke to Sergeant Gonzalez about his findings. Sergeant Gonzalez confirmed he told Deputy James over the phone the situation seemed like a prank, stating, *"It's like a prank are you serious? And recalled saying, "You know she can go to jail for that, you know kind of thing, cuz at that point we're, we're thinking it's a DV [Domestic Violence] stalking."*

Sergeant Gonzalez stated after Deputy James gathered the information and informed him [REDACTED] *"admitted to everything,"* he agreed they could proceed with a domestic violence stalking charge.

When asked to clarify his understanding of Deputy James's statement [REDACTED] had *"admitted to everything."* Sergeant Gonzalez stated, *"That they went out there, obviously there was other people and that they went out there and then drove over there to the house, threw the tampons and then I guess drove away and then came back to threw more, to throw more from what I recall."*

Sergeant Gonzalez was asked to explain his interpretation of Deputy James' statement, *"You already know what I want to do."* Sergeant Gonzalez explained, *"Oh to determine if we're arresting or not arresting. So obviously he was already gonna be determining that you know he was gonna make the arrest for DV [Domestic Violence] cuz he thought it was gonna be."*

Sergeant Gonzalez said Deputy James believed the incident appeared to be domestic violence stalking and was likely leaning toward an arrest. Sergeant Gonzalez added if the suspects had denied involvement, they likely would have completed only a report, but the admission, video surveillance, and actions described led him to support the arrest.

Around this time, Sergeant Gonzalez also spoke with Sergeant William Leven about the incident. Sergeant Gonzalez said they discussed the case and Sergeant Leven *"didn't agree with it"* and questioned whether they had probable cause. Sergeant Gonzalez explained he believed they did.

Sergeant Gonzalez confirmed he reviewed and approved Deputy James's affidavit before [REDACTED] was transported to the jail, and when asked whether anything in the affidavit differed from what Deputy James had reported to him, he responded, *"I don't think so."*

Sergeant Gonzalez was asked why only [REDACTED] was arrested and not the other suspects involved. Sergeant Gonzalez provided the excuse the other individuals were *"out of state supposedly."* When asked how law enforcement officers would normally handle a situation involving three subjects in a crime when probable cause was established, Sergeant Gonzalez replied, *"Everybody would go to jail... or be filed on."* Sergeant Gonzalez was specifically asked whether any charges had been filed on any of the other suspects involved in this incident. Sergeant Gonzalez responded, *"I do not think so."* Sergeant Gonzalez reasoned he did not believe charges against the other involved individuals would *"go anywhere."* When asked why, Sergeant Gonzalez stated, *"Because it's a DV,"* noting although they could have filed charges on the others, those charges were not domestic violence related.

Sergeant Gonzalez was asked whether alternative ways of handling the incident, such as a littering violation, were discussed. Sergeant Gonzalez stated, *"No. no. It was DV stalking."* When asked why he did not respond to the scene. Sergeant Gonzalez did not consider it at the time, noting Deputy James was handling the investigation and he trusted his judgment.

Sergeant Gonzalez confirmed neither he nor Deputy James reviewed the body worn camera footage from Detective Bartzler's response to the original incident.

Sergeant Gonzalez was asked what led him to believe there was probable cause, despite initially telling Deputy James the situation appeared to be a prank. Sergeant Gonzalez explained he first believed the incident would only require an information report; however, the decision changed to a stalking arrest after [REDACTED] *"admitting to doing what she did with the stalking."* Sergeant Gonzalez continued, *"It's DV stalking."* When asked directly if he still believed the incident rose to the level of domestic violence stalking, he responded, *"Yes."*

Sergeant Gonzalez was asked to explain his knowledge and understanding pertaining to Florida Statute § 784.048(2) stalking. Sergeant Gonzalez responded in order to answer the question he would need to read the statute directly from the book. The question was clarified, advising he was not being asked for a verbatim recitation, but rather for his working understanding of stalking. Sergeant Gonzalez replied, *"Yeah it's, it's following or harassing kind of thing. When it comes to the, the just it'd be better if I read it off to what it is cuz I, cuz I read it that night just to make sure... Yeah just, just following, harassing kind of thing to where it's you know they're doing it on, on people that and then the victim it's you know it's it's bothered it's it's fearful of what's happening kind of thing."* Ultimately, Sergeant Gonzalez failed to provide a clear and concise understanding of the statute in question.

Sergeant Gonzalez was confronted with the fact he continued to believe the incident met the elements of domestic violence stalking, even though a Judge, the State Attorney, and others later determined there was insufficient probable cause. Sergeant Gonzalez responded, *"Well yeah but I mean yeah now you know I look at, at that time yes I, I thought we had it."*

Sergeant Gonzalez stated if the same circumstances were presented to him today, given what he knows now, he would not approve a physical arrest and would instead complete *"an info report."* Sergeant Gonzalez explained the reference to third-party contact during the phone call with Deputy James did not influence his decision.

Sergeant Gonzalez added he has supervised Deputy James for two years and had no knowledge of Deputy James treating firefighters poorly or unprofessionally. In addition, Sergeant Gonzalez was not aware of any personal connection between the reported victims [Morgan Rhodes or Joseph Coluccio] or their family and Deputy James.

Sergeant Gonzalez acknowledged Deputy James' experience, reputation, and influence likely affected his decision-making, ultimately admitting he deferred to Deputy James' interpretation of the incident and Florida State Statute for Stalking. Sergeant Gonzalez admitted to his own shortcomings and took responsibility for how the incident ended.

At the conclusion of the interview, Sergeant Gonzalez reasoned the decision to arrest Gabrielle was not made out of malice or ill intent but rather the legal and policy-driven responsibilities that accompany Domestic Violence incidents. Sergeant Gonzalez stated, *"we have to act on it."*

In closing Sergeant Gonzalez stated, *"I did decide, it was my decision not Billy's [Sergeant Leven] or the Watch Commanders [Lieutenant Barnard] that decided to go with the, with the arrest and knowing now it could have gone the other way which would have been a lot easier for everybody which would be to document the incident like you can when it comes to DV [Domestic Violence]. You know I made the decision solely, so you know so if anybody's gonna be at fault it's gonna be me so. But I didn't intentionally do it out of you know malice or anything like that."*

In closing, Sergeant Gonzalez was asked if he violated the following General Orders and his responses are detailed below:

GO-026.02.V.G.3.a – Supervisor Responsibility	Yes
GO-026-02.V.B.3 – Disciplinary Rules	No
GO-026-02.V.C.5.m – Negligence, Not Endangering	No
GO-026-02.V.G.1.a – General Proficiency	Yes

Subject Interview with Deputy Royce James

On February 6, 2026, at approximately 1119 hours, Lieutenant Gordon and Sergeant Vanzo conducted a sworn, recorded interview with Deputy Royce James. The interview took place at the Sheriff's Office Administration Building at 123 W. Indiana Avenue, Deland. Also present with Deputy James was his Union Representative Sergeant Sean Gowan. Below is a synopsis of the audio-recorded interview.

The interview began with Deputy James describing how he became involved in the incident which led to the arrest of [REDACTED] for Domestic Violence Stalking.

Deputy James stated, *"I was on regular patrol and Deputy Berard called me and said a firefighter who works [REDACTED] had an incident that happened over in Deltona and...he [Deputy Berard] told me that she [REDACTED] called the police, deputies came out*

and she wasn't comfortable with the decision that was made at that time. He gives me a very brief overview, he didn't really seem like he knew the entirety of it, but he asked if I would go just generally speak with her and find out if I, like to give her advice on what she should or should not do."

Deputy James explained, Deputy Berard worked the opposite shift and was not on duty when he requested assistance. When asked how Deputy Berard became informed, Deputy James stated, "He [Deputy Berard] knows her [REDACTED] to some extent. Apparently she reached out to him, ran down a brief overview of what happened and he goes well it doesn't really sound right but let me have another deputy speak with you to see if something was done improperly or whatever have you. So, I agree and I [REDACTED] kind of met cuz the fire station is literally [REDACTED] so I walked over there."

Deputy James explained when he walked to the fire station, he expected a routine law enforcement question because deputies and firefighters maintain a good working relationship and frequently seek each other's guidance.

Instead, [REDACTED] explained a situation involving [REDACTED] [REDACTED] and his [REDACTED] all of whom are firefighters. [REDACTED] described circulating rumors within the firefighter community indicating [REDACTED] was upset about the new relationship. Deputy James was informed [REDACTED] returned to her home to find 75–100 used tampons scattered across the yard, and surveillance video showed a truck resembling [REDACTED] was involved. [REDACTED] stated she initially reported the incident to Detective Bartzer [prior road deputy], who told her nothing could be done since it had only occurred once. Unsatisfied with that response, [REDACTED] reached out to Deputy Berard for guidance, which ultimately led to Deputy James speaking with her.

It should be noted, Deputy James was further asked whether Deputy Berard's involvement changed or influenced his decision in this incident. Deputy James said it did not, explaining Deputy Berard provided only minimal information, primarily suggesting he speak with [REDACTED] Deputy James further stated he did not know the extent of any relationship between Deputy Berard and [REDACTED] and it did not influence his decision making in the incident.

Deputy James was asked whether he spoke with Detective Bartzer about his reasoning or thought process to determine if he might have missed something. Deputy James responded he did speak with him, but only later and after the incident was concluded.

After speaking with [REDACTED] Deputy James said he asked enough questions to determine the presence of a domestic relationship and disagreed with the fact no incident report had been completed. Deputy James suggested [REDACTED] contact law enforcement in Deltona again to ensure the incident was properly documented and handled by the correct area of responsibility. [REDACTED] was hesitant due to how the initial response was handled and asked if Deputy James could handle it instead. Deputy James consulted Sergeant Gonzalez and obtained approval to reinvestigate the case.

Deputy James was asked whether he recorded his interaction with [REDACTED] on his body-worn camera. Deputy James responded he did not, explaining, *"No I, I didn't think this was gonna evolve into this, so I thought it was just a general conversation so no I didn't activate my BWC for that."* Deputy James stated prior to this incident, he never met [REDACTED] or [REDACTED] and had no personal relationship with any of the parties involved or their families.

Once Sergeant Gonzalez authorized him to proceed, Deputy James began the investigation by gathering basic information, identifying [REDACTED] vehicle, reviewing photos shown by [REDACTED] and watching video surveillance she emailed. When asked whether there had been any prior contact between [REDACTED] and the reported victims [REDACTED] Deputy James advised, *"Not directly."*

Deputy James was asked about [REDACTED]'s involvement, since he was listed as an additional reported victim, and whether any contact was made with him during the investigation. Deputy James explained he did not speak with [REDACTED] in person but spoke over the phone due to [REDACTED] working a 24-hour shift in Orlando and unable to respond. Deputy James added he could not obtain a sworn statement from [REDACTED], as he understood sworn statements cannot be taken over the phone, though he did obtain one from [REDACTED]. Deputy James also confirmed his phone conversation with [REDACTED] was not recorded on his body-worn camera explaining he did not initially anticipate taking on the investigation and already gathered most of the information he needed once he did.

Deputy James explained he discussed potential charges with [REDACTED]. Deputy James explained he considered two options, stalking or a misdemeanor charge for littering with the intent to threaten or intimidate. Deputy James said the littering statute was created for situations where materials are left to intimidate specific groups. Although tampons were thrown into the yard, he did not believe the act was meant to intimidate but instead to harass due to their domestic relationship. Based on that, he decided the littering intimidation statute did not apply and the conduct more closely aligned with stalking.

Deputy James was asked to explain the elements of Domestic Violence Stalking under Florida Statute 784.048(2). Deputy James did so and was able to provide a clear and concise understanding of the statute. Deputy James reasoned, *"And in my mind given the fact you know obviously this plan was thought up, tampon a large quantity of tampons were purchased, each of them were opened, they were at that time I didn't know whether they were used or not but come to find out later they were, it was red paint which obviously adds to the maliciousness of it... I know the entire thing is one incident but it, throughout this incident there is arguably some sort of pattern of behavior or course of conduct that led to you harassing or intimidating the victims. So that's why I decided to go with stalking versus the littering because I, I honestly did not feel the littering was to intimidate. It was more of a harassment thing."*

As the interview continued, Deputy James described the investigative steps he took which led him to contact [REDACTED] at her residence. Deputy James explained during his interview with [REDACTED] he sought to hear her side of the story. Deputy James advised when he told [REDACTED] he was investigating an incident at her [REDACTED] house, she immediately *"Says I don't even know where he lives, I don't know what you're talking about."* According to Deputy James, he challenged her denial by explaining the evidence suggesting her involvement. Deputy James stated

he reminded her, as a firefighter, she held a public facing profession where behavior is scrutinized more heavily. Deputy James said he explained dishonesty and defensiveness could significantly impact her career, because public servants such as firefighters, law enforcement, and teachers are held to higher standards and often receive heightened media attention.

A review of Deputy James' body-worn camera footage showed Deputy James arrived on scene and explained to [REDACTED] he was there to investigate an incident that occurred at her [REDACTED] residence on [REDACTED]. In response [REDACTED] stated, "*I didn't know he lived there.*" Deputy James interpreted this initial statement as untruthful. However, it is also possible [REDACTED] meant she was unaware [REDACTED] lived on [REDACTED] at the time of the incident, as Dawn had located the address and directed her to drive.

Based on this context, it is possible both perspectives were valid at the same time. Deputy James may have understood [REDACTED] statement as a denial of knowing the location altogether, while [REDACTED] may have been referring to the fact that she did not know the specific address herself. As such, the exchange may reflect a misunderstanding in how the statement was interpreted rather than an intentional misrepresentation.

Deputy James was asked whether he was upset during his interaction with [REDACTED] considering she was a firefighter. Deputy James stated, "*It didn't upset me per se, but I thought it was kind of ridiculous.*" Deputy James was asked whether [REDACTED] status as a firefighter influenced his decision about whether she should be taken to jail. Deputy James said it did not. Deputy James added the victims were also firefighters, and because everyone involved shared the same profession, it had no effect on his decision.

Deputy James explained after he presented what he described as overwhelming evidence to [REDACTED] her story changed. Deputy James stated, "*But the final version was she did know at some point prior to getting to her [REDACTED] house they were going to her [REDACTED] house to do this.*" [REDACTED] then admitted to being present during the incident but denied throwing the tampons, instead placing the blame on Dawn and Dionne. [REDACTED] claimed she had no prior knowledge of their intentions and simply went along without knowing whose house they were going to.

Deputy James was asked whether Dawn or Dionne ever became suspects in the case. Deputy James confirmed they did, explaining that everyone involved was considered a suspect at that point. Deputy James noted, unlike [REDACTED], Dawn and Dionne did not have a domestic relationship with the victim, making them suspects only in the incident itself rather than in the domestic violence aspect.

Deputy James was asked directly whether he ever interviewed Dawn or Dionne to which he advised, no. Deputy James explained he allowed [REDACTED] to call Dawn while they were waiting, and during that call Dawn insisted [REDACTED] had no involvement and did not know what they were doing. Deputy James said he did not believe this and noted [REDACTED] changed her story and eventually admitted she knew, at some point before arriving, that they were going to her [REDACTED] house. Deputy James said Dawn described the incident as "*just a prank,*" but he explained to both [REDACTED] and Dawn the behavior did not resemble a harmless prank and served

no legitimate purpose. Dawn also claimed she was the one who threw the tampons while [REDACTED] only drove, and Deputy James told [REDACTED] participation as the driver still made her responsible, similar to a getaway driver in a bank robbery.

Deputy James was asked whether he provided Dawn an opportunity to give a formal statement. Deputy James explained his intention was to do so after finishing with [REDACTED] and then begin developing charges against both Dawn and Dionne. However, after [REDACTED] arrest, [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] told him they did not wish to pursue charges against them. Believing the incident was entirely [REDACTED] idea because she was the only one with a motive. Deputy James explained this conversation with [REDACTED] took place after [REDACTED] arrest, either later that night or the next day, though he was not certain. When asked if he recorded the conversation on his body-worn camera or completed a supplemental report, he said he did not and acknowledged he should have done a supplement.

When asked whether he ever contacted [REDACTED] Dionne Skaggs, directly, Deputy James stated, *"No not at all. [REDACTED] lived in Ohio."*

Deputy James was asked whether he felt he gave [REDACTED] a fair opportunity to explain herself. Deputy James said he did, noting after reviewing his body-worn camera, he did not believe he talked over her or acted rudely. Deputy James stated, *"I feel like I gave her plenty of time to explain or dispel my alarm per se that this was not something that was done with malicious intent."*

Deputy James was asked to explain a verbal exchange captured on body-worn camera in which [REDACTED] remarked, *"Someone's having a bad day."* Deputy James said he believed [REDACTED] was frustrated and did not fully understand the legal seriousness of the situation, especially given the potential impact on her career. Deputy James felt her comment implied he was acting without legitimate reason. When asked how he responded, Deputy James said he told her he was not having a bad day but a great one. Deputy James stated, *"I think that's what led to her saying I'm having a bad day which pretty much implies I'm doing this for no legitimate reason only to because I'm having a bad day."*

Deputy James was asked whether his mind was already made up to arrest [REDACTED] before interviewing her. Deputy James said it was not and stated there could be additional evidence and statements to consider.

Deputy James was asked why he consulted his sergeant on this particular call. Deputy James explained he does not normally consult his sergeant on every call but did so in this case for two main reasons. Sergeant Gonzalez had specifically requested updates especially since Deputy James was working in District 4 instead of District 6 and because of [REDACTED] profession as a public official. Deputy James stated, when deputies encounter a public official and an arrest may be possible, they are expected to notify supervision.

Deputy James explained before interviewing [REDACTED] he spoke with Sergeant Gonzalez and outlined the information he had gathered up to that point. Based on what he had seen, he believed the elements of stalking were present, but he still needed to confirm several details, including identifying [REDACTED] at the scene, confirming the vehicle, and establishing intent and motive.

When asked about his comment to Sergeant Gonzalez, *"You already know what I wanna do,"* Deputy James stated his mindset at the time was the case met the elements of stalking unless [REDACTED] provided information that changed his investigation. Deputy James said he needed to interview [REDACTED] to determine whether the case would continue in that direction or shift based on her explanation.

After interviewing [REDACTED], Deputy James relayed the details of the interview to Sergeant Gonzalez. Deputy James stated, *"So, I lay out pretty much the nature of my interview with [REDACTED] and at that point I felt it was stalking and my mind was made up at that point."* Deputy James advised Sergeant Gonzalez said he would call him back.

When asked about his comment to Sergeant Gonzalez, [REDACTED] *"fully confessed to everything,"* Deputy James explained, *"What I meant is she [REDACTED] again at first she lied and I mean the final story was she admitted that she was part of it. She admitted to driving the truck, she admitting to knowing where her [REDACTED] lived, she admitting, she admitted to knowing where they were going prior to even getting there. She admitted knowing what they were gonna do so she, she emphatically denied being involved but what [REDACTED] meant is I didn't throw the tampons I was just driving the truck and I was part of the whole situation. So, in my opinion going back to my example of the getaway driver if you're, a bank robbery takes place and a getaway driver admits he was driving and he drove there and they knew what they were gonna do you're involved in that whole incident. So, when I say admits to everything that's kind of what I meant, the whole the whole picture was she explained from front to start why this whole thing took place."*

Deputy James stated he eventually received a final call from Sergeant Gonzalez, who asked additional clarifying questions, including whether there was any indication [REDACTED] had been invited to the residence or had recent contact with [REDACTED]. After a brief conversation Sergeant Gonzalez agreed with the decision to make an arrest for stalking.

Deputy James was asked about third-party contact mentioned during the call with Sergeant Gonzalez and what additional evidence he intended to obtain. Deputy James stated, *"Well, whatever he asked me to get. I, I felt the gossip and rumors and third-party stuff had no bearing on the case but if my sergeant wants me to make an attempt to figure that out, I would have respected what he asked me to do."* When asked if he had done so, he responded, *"No I didn't contact any of their family or I'm sorry any of their friends or other firefighters I just I felt that had no bearing on just cuz there rumors and gossip about [REDACTED] doesn't like her [REDACTED] I, I felt that was completely irrelevant to the case."*

Deputy James was asked whether he felt he had provided Sergeant Gonzalez with all the information needed to make the best decision. Deputy James stated, *"I do because again the way I'm thinking the rumors and gossip and other firefighters not liking, I, I thought that had no bearing on, on the case."*

Deputy James stated at the conclusion of his interview with [REDACTED] he believed she was lying about her involvement in the incident. When asked whether he had obtained any physical evidence to support that belief, he acknowledged he had not. Deputy James was then asked whether speaking in detail with Dawn and Dionne would have changed his perception. Deputy James responded it

would not, explaining even if they claimed the incident was meant as a prank, it would not alter his view the conduct met the elements of stalking. Deputy James stated, *"This serves no legitimate purpose and by interviewing [REDACTED] and harping on why did you do this why did you do this I'm, I'm looking for her to give me an answer that will dispel my alarm into this is malicious not just a prank. It's two very different things in my opinion."*

Deputy James explained that [REDACTED] was ultimately arrested. Deputy James then called [REDACTED] to notify her of the arrest, which effectively concluded his involvement in the investigation. [REDACTED] was then transported to District 4 and was placed in a holding cell while Deputy James completed his paperwork. Deputy James advised the district was busy that night, including another female arrestee for DUI who was placed in the adjacent cell. When asked if he spoke with [REDACTED] while she was detained, Deputy James said he did not initially. Deputy James explained District 4 sergeants advised [REDACTED] and the DUI arrestee could be transported together, meaning [REDACTED] would have a longer wait. Because of this, Deputy James offered her a drink and a snack but did not recall much additional conversation.

When questioned about [REDACTED] complaint he told her he was trying to get her to *"shut up,"* Deputy James denied making that statement. Deputy James said [REDACTED] was not talking much at the district and added, *"No, I wanted to have that conversation I didn't want her to shut up."* [Referring to the initial interview that took place at [REDACTED] residence.]

Deputy James was asked directly whether, after considering all of the information presented, he still believed the stalking charge was appropriate. Deputy James reiterated, he was correct in his determination the incident met the State Statute requirements for Domestic Violence Stalking and that both the Judge presiding over the case and the State Attorney's Office were wrong in their determination. Deputy James reasoned, *"Let me reverse engineer this. So, if it's not stalking...and lets just take the littering thing off the table for a second. Then the only other option is this behavior is perfectly legal and acceptable. So that means a domestic partner can behave in this manner and us as law enforcement we do nothing. That just doesn't sound logical to me."*

When advised law enforcement does not create the laws but enforces them, Deputy James acknowledged and agreed. Deputy James stated, *"Right I no, I completely agree with you but I'm saying that to say if we do nothing then I'm saying that to say this is not a violation of any law. And that just I just don't, I just don't feel that."*

Deputy James added shortly after [REDACTED] arrest, a State Attorney assigned to the case whom he knew contacted him by text regarding the arrest. Deputy James read the message, *"I dropped your stalking case the other day, made me think of you and I go yeah I heard it might be getting dropped cuz [REDACTED] [sic] approached me and said yeah it might be getting dropped and I'm like I don't know I hadn't heard... [REDACTED] Yeah [REDACTED] So I go just out of curiosity why did it get dropped? She goes the statute says repeatedly. I understand some attorneys have said it can be one event but as of now I'm not subscribing to that theory. Also, I think an arrest was sufficient in that situation."*

Deputy James was asked who notarized his charging affidavit, and he responded it was Deputy McNabb. Based on some of the allegations in the initial complaint, Deputy James was then asked if he forged Deputy McNabb's signature on the legal document. Deputy James denied the accusation and explained once he completed his report, he submitted his report for approval as is the normal process.

Deputy James was asked whether he, Sergeant Gonzalez or Deputy McNabb had any connection to a relative, family member, or other individual who could have influenced the investigation. Deputy James responded no.

Deputy James was asked if he would have handled the case differently knowing what he knows now. Deputy James responded the only change he would have made was sending the case to District 4, but otherwise he believed his investigation was thorough and still met the elements of stalking. Deputy James stated, in his view, doing nothing would have been the wrong decision.

Deputy James was asked whether he should have activated his body worn camera during the entirety of the incident and each time he was in contact with all involved parties. Deputy James stated, *"One hundred percent I should, one hundred percent I should have turned the camera on."*

Deputy James was asked why he did not include Dawn's statement, made over the phone, in the arrest affidavit. Deputy James stated, *"I think I put a blurb in there where [REDACTED] placed blame on [REDACTED]. The reason I didn't put that in there now that you're asking the question is I, I'm doing a charging affidavit on [REDACTED] and I it's a, it's a statement over the phone it's not confirmed it's not legitimized I just, I just thought that it had no bearing on [REDACTED] charging affidavit."*

Deputy James' was asked whether there was any malicious, conspiratorial, or evil intent behind the arrest. Deputy James stated, *"No. I, I made the decision I made and the arrest I made because I truly feel I have probable cause to support stalking. Would a reasonable and prudent person believe this crime occurred? I think yes. That's the only reason I made the arrest and if it wasn't DV, I would have just filed on her, it's DV. I, I still would have filed even if it wasn't DV."*

In closing, Deputy James was asked if he violated the following General Orders and his responses are detailed below:

GO-026-02.V.D.9.p – Use of Equipment: BWC	Yes
GO-026-02.V.B.3 – Disciplinary Rules	No
GO-026-02.V.C.5.m – Negligence, Not Endangering	No
GO-026-02.V.G.1.a – General Proficiency	No

CONCLUSION:

On March 30, 2026, this Internal Affairs investigation was presented to Chief Deputy Brian Henderson and the executive command staff. Upon completion of the presentation, Chief Deputy Henderson sustained the following General Order violations against Deputy Royce James:

GO-026-02.V.D.9.p – Use of Equipment: BWC	Sustained
GO-026-02.V.B.3 – Disciplinary Rules	Sustained
GO-026-02.V.C.5.m – Negligence, Not Endangering	Sustained
GO-026-02.V.G.1.a – General Proficiency	Sustained

Additionally, Chief Deputy Henderson sustained the following General Order violations against Sergeant Dennis Gonzalez:

GO-026.02.V.G.3.a – Supervisor Responsibility	Sustained
GO-026-02.V.B.3 – Disciplinary Rules	Sustained
GO-026-02.V.C.5.m – Negligence, Not Endangering	Sustained
GO-026-02.V.G.1.a – General Proficiency	Sustained

EXHIBITS:

- A. Transcript of Interview with [REDACTED]
- B. Transcript of Interview with Dawn [REDACTED]
- C. Transcript of Interview with Detective Ethan Bartzer
- D. Transcript of Interview with Deputy Renee McNabb
- E. Transcript of Interview with Sergeant William Leven
- F. Transcript of Interview with Lieutenant Bryan Barnard
- G. Transcript of Interview with Sergeant Dennis Gonzalez
- H. Transcript of Interview with Deputy Royce James
- I. Evidence
- J. Digital Evidence

WITNESSES:

Volusia Sheriff's Office
123 W. Indiana Avenue
Deland, FL 32720

[REDACTED]
Dawn [REDACTED]
Detective Ethan Bartzer
Deputy Renee McNabb
Sergeant William Leven
Lieutenant Bryan Barnard

Under penalties of perjury, I declare that I have read the foregoing document and that the facts stated in it are true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

AND

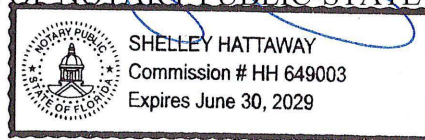
I, the undersigned, do hereby swear, under the penalty of perjury, that, to the best of my personal knowledge, information, and belief, I have not knowingly or willfully deprived, or allowed another to deprive, the suspect of the investigation of any rights contained in ss. 112.532 and 112.533, Florida Statutes.

Sergeant: M. Vanzo #8469 DATE: 4/14/26
Sergeant Michael Vanzo, #8469

**STATE OF FLORIDA
COUNTY OF VOLUSIA**

Sworn to (or affirmed) and subscribed before me by means of ☒ physical presence or ☐ online
Notarized this 14th day of April, 2026 by Sergeant Michael Vanzo.


SIGNATURE OF NOTARY PUBLIC-STATE OF FLORIDA



PRINT, TYPE, OR STAMP COMMISSIONED NAME OF NOTARY PUBLIC

☒ PERSONALLY KNOWN OR ☐ PRODUCED IDENTIFICATION

TYPE OF IDENTIFICATION PRODUCED

APPROVED BY: Brian Henderson DATE: 04/14/26
CHIEF DEPUTY BRIAN HENDERSON
VOLUSIA COUNTY, FLORIDA